

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The shaft according to claim [[1]] 29, wherein the further two of the curved portion are provided further comprises at least one straight portion.

Claims 5-6 (Cancelled).

Claim 7 (Withdrawn/Currently Amended): The shaft according to claim [[1]] 4, wherein the further portion further comprises two of the straight portions portion are provided.

Claims 8-9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 1, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and
conducting quenching.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 2, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and

conducting quenching.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 3, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and

conducting quenching.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 4, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and

conducting quenching.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 5, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and

conducting quenching.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 6, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and
conducting quenching.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 7, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and
conducting quenching.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 8, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;

forming the curved portion by component rolling; and
conducting quenching.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): A manufacturing method for manufacturing the shaft as in claim 9, comprising the steps of:

forming the splined portion with a predetermined shape by cold forging, machining and component rolling;
forming the curved portion by component rolling; and
conducting quenching.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The manufacturing method for the shaft according to claim 10, further comprising the step of: conducting shot peening of the shaft.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The shaft according to claim [2]] 29, wherein the splined portion has a predetermined shape resulting from cold forging, machining and component rolling; forming the curved portion by component rolling; and conducting quenching.

Claim 21 (Cancelled).

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The shaft according to claim 4, wherein the splined portion has a predetermined shape resulting from cold forging, machining and component rolling; forming the curved portion by component rolling; and conducting quenching.

Claims 23-24 (Cancelled).

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The shaft according to claim 7, wherein the splined portion has a predetermined shape resulting from cold forging, machining and component rolling; forming the curved portion by component rolling; and conducting quenching.

Claims 26-27 (Cancelled).

Claim 28 (Withdrawn/Currently Amended): The method [[shaft]] according to claim 10, wherein the splined portion predetermined shape further results from shot peening.

Claim 29 (New): A shaft including a shank comprising:

 a large diameter portion;

 a splined portion engaged with a fitting member, said splined portion including a plurality of splines and a plurality of grooves which diametrically converge at a position spaced from the large diameter portion in the axial direction of the shaft;

 a tapered portion which stops the fitting member and which is located adjacent the large diameter portion, wherein the tapered portion reduces the diameter of the shank in the space between the splined portion and the large diameter portion to a minimum diameter which is greater than that of the splined portion at the position where the plurality of splines and the plurality of grooves diametrically converge; and

 a further portion in the space between the splined portion and the tapered portion, wherein the further portion reduces the diameter of the shank from that of the minimum diameter of the tapered portion to that of the splined portion at the position where the plurality of splines and the plurality of grooves diametrically converge, and wherein the further portion comprises at least two curved portions.